THE BUFFALO HISTORY MUSEUM

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About Our Buffalo Orphan Asylum Collection

Mss. C82-1

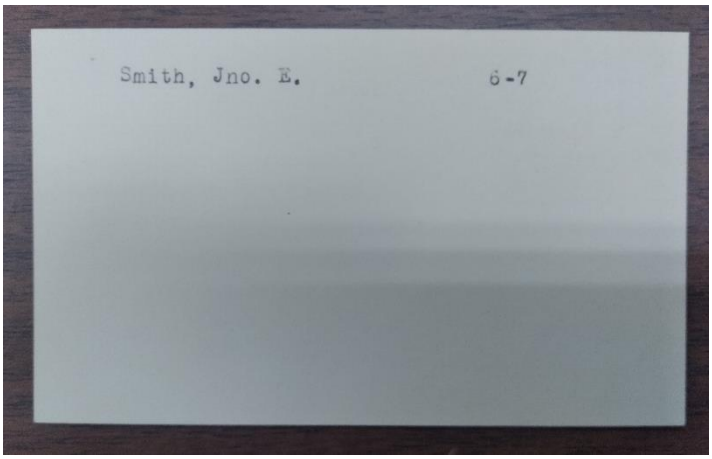
The Buffalo Orphan Asylum (BOA) was founded in 1836 and incorporated in 1837 by women from a dozen Protestant churches. It was nondenominational and admitted children from all backgrounds.

In 1939, the Asylum discontinued housing children and closed its facilities. Its endowment was placed in a trust in 1938, and the Children's Foundation of Erie County was charged with distributing those funds to child-related charities, most notably the Adoption Bureau of the Children's Aid Society.

The BOA records, including 52 bound volumes, were donated to us in 1982. Staff then typed up index cards for **some** of the children served, those named in volumes dated about **1882 to 1939**, as seen in the **Indexed** column below. Vol. 1 has been transcribed into an online spreadsheet by Dr. Rosanne Higgins.

We assume that any name changes that occurred after children left the Asylum are not reflected in these records.

Sample Card



This is a typical BOA index card. The **6-7** notation means that John E. Smith is listed in volume 6, page 7.

Our staff are unable to offer look-ups in the unindexed volumes. They can be seen by appointment by you or a researcher you hire.

Vol	Content	Date Range	Indexed
1	Admissions and Departures	November 29, 1836 to September 27, 1853	Yes
2	Admissions and Departures	May 8, 1848 to December 28, 1874	No
3	Admissions and Departures	January 4, 1875 to March 20, 1882	No
3A	Admissions and Departures	June 10, 1876 to March 31, 1882	No
3A	Physician Records	October 13, 1884 to October 21, 1885	No
3A	Secretary's Notes	June 18, 1894 to March 31, 1896	No
4	Admissions	May 6, 1894 to September 30, 1908	Yes
5	Admissions	May 14, 1897 to August 31, 1939	Yes
6	Departures	January 4, 1882 to September 30, 1908	Yes
7	Departures	October 5, 1908 to December 30, 1939	Yes
8	Records of Each Child	January 2, 1882 to 1898 [estimated]	Yes
9	Admissions	1895 to 1908 [estimated]	Yes
10	Records of Each Child	Early 1900s [estimated]	No
11	Family Records	Ca. 1916. No page numbers.	Yes
12	Index of Infants in Asylum	October 1919 to January 1921	No
12	Index of Children in Nursery	October 1919 to January 1921	No
12	Index of Girls in Asylum	October 1919 to January 1921	No
12	Index of Boys in Asylum	October 1919 to January 1921	No
13	Index of Admissions and Departures	October 1905 to October 1, 1909	No
14	Index of Admissions and Departures	October 1909 to October 1913	No
15	Index of Admissions and Departures	October 1913 to August 1918	No
Volumes 16-52 contain meeting minutes, memos, financial records, newspaper clippings, annual reports, and other material that rarely or never identifies children by name.			

- **This guide lists our other orphan home records**